willingness of the Government to give it a non-official President under certain conditions was communicated to that council several months ago and that the matter is still under the consideration of that body. All the councils without exception have been allowed the privilege of having elected non-official vice-presidents and many of the councils have already exercised that privilege. The reconstituted councils have not yet had time to settle down to work, and it is too soon to dogmatise on their attitude or achievement in fiscal and other matters. Government trust that the members of these councils would rise to a full sense of their opportunities and responsibilities and succeed in making them real, living institutions. The transfer of minor roads and primary schools within municipal limits to the control of the councils concerned is receiving the consideration of Government.

29. The Bill for the constitution of administrative panchayats in rural areas is ready for publication. Government have not yet come to a decision in regard to the desirability of creating District Boards. The Ezhava Bill and the Nair Regulation Amendment Bill have been postponed for the consideration of the new Legislative Council. The Committee appointed to examine the customary law relating to marriage and inheritance among Nanjanad Vellalas has just submitted its report, and it is now engaging the attention of Government.

30. Legislative Council.—I have already touched upon most of the legislative activities of the Government during the period, but by far the most important legislative measure still remains to be mentioned. I refer to Regulation II of 1097, passed with the object of bringing into existence an enlarged Legislative Council with a substantial elected non-official majority and endowed with considerably larger powers than those possessed by the Council which it supersedes. The concomitant Regulation, IX of 1097, having for its object the prevention of corrupt practices at legislative elections, needs no separate mention. I do not propose to dilate on the new Legislative Council Regulation and the rules framed under it, beyond inviting your pointed attention to the fact that they constitute the largest measure of constitutional reform ever yet inaugurated in an Indian State, and I want you to remember that such a liberal measure would not have been possible but for your good fortune in possessing as your Ruler His Highness Sri Mulam Tirunal whose constant watchword is the progress and prosperity of his subjects in all possible directions. Besides the usual power of asking questions, both original and supplementary, and moving resolutions, the new Council has been given a very substantial share in the actual administration of the State in the shape of the right of voting on all heads of the budget except a few which have been reserved for very special reasons. It is unfortunate that even this uniquely generous measure of reform, which has gone considerably farther than the demands made by the representatives of the people themselves, has been without trial characterised in certain quarters as inadequate and unsatisfactory. Government have no doubt that these discordant notes do not echo the real voice of the people and they confidently look to all loyal subjects of His Highness the Maha Raja to willingly cooperate with them in making this great constitutional experiment a success.

31. Sri Mulam Popular Assembly.—The rules regulating the constitution and conduct of the Sri Mulam Popular Assembly have been revised, as promised, and the draft revised rules have been just published in a supplemental issue of the Gazette. In regard to the qualifications of members and electors and the procedure connected with the conduct of elections, etc., these rules closely follow those framed to give effect to the new Legislative Council Regulation, while an attempt has also been made to methodise the work of the Assembly and avoid repetition. Eighty-five of the members of the Assembly will be elected and fifteen alone nominated under the new rules and members once elected will continue to be so for three consecutive sessions. Your suggestions on the draft rules would be most welcome, and they will receive careful consideration at the hands of the Government before they are finally passed.

32. Devaswoms and Land Revenue.—After a careful consideration of the report of the Devaswom Separation Committee, Government have decided to

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place the administration of Sirkar Devaswoms under a separate Devaswom Department, and simultaneously with the creation of this department the age-long grievance of the non-eligibility of certain classes of the people of this country for admission into the land revenue service of the State will disappear. The orders of the Government on this vexed question will issue shortly, and I may tell you that those orders, besides satisfying the just aspirations of large sections of His Highness' subjects and securing increased efficiency in the management and maintenance of Sirkar Devaswoms, would also convey the immeasurable benefit of an assurance to the numerous holders of Sirkar Devaswomvaka properties that their holdings will, for all time to come, be accorded equal treatment with pandaravaka lands in the matter of incidence of tenure.

33. While Government are gratified at the indications of an effort at *rapprochement* on the part of the various communities and signs of the healing up of their differences, they are pained to see that the disruptive forces that are causing so much havoc elsewhere have not left Travancore altogether untouched and that they have supplied handy material to those engaged in promoting public excitement. The effects of their unhealthy influence are reflected in the unrest among the immature and the more impulsive sections of the population. It would be well to remember that mere shibboleths can never make a solid basis for enduring political progress. Those who are indulging in the dissemination of these deleterious propaganda are perhaps unconsciously, but none the less undoubtedly, doing a distinct disservice to their country, and it is my earnest prayer that the fair name of Travancore for political sobriety and respect for constituted authority should not be tarnished by any thoughtless encouragement of such propaganda.

34. Depressed and Backward Classes.—The amelioration of the lot of the depressed and the backward classes and their gradual elevation in the social scale have continued to engage the attention of the Government. The safest and most effective means of advancing these communities is education, and it is a source of pleasure to the Government to note that the members of these classes have been making steady headway in this direction. The number of Pulaya pupils attending schools rose by 11·5 per cent., of Parayas by 16·6 per cent., and of Mahomedans by 12·8 per cent. during 1096. Government are gratified to observe that, out of 356 Pulaya pupils that sat for the annual examination in class IV of primary schools, 174 passed, and that 136 of the latter are prosecuting their higher studies. The scheme of scholarships already referred to would, when brought into force, afford a further stimulus to the expansion of education among the members of these classes. Care has been taken to represent as far as possible the interests of these communities on the several municipal councils and panchayat courts. The Co-operative Department has been, for some time past, devoting its special attention to the spread of the co-operative movement among the depressed classes, and Government are glad to note that 44 out of the 265 primary societies in the country are working for the uplift of these classes. The social, educational and material advancement of the fisher folk along the coast is engaging the attention of the Department of Fisheries, and a provision similar to the one already made in favour of the depressed classes has been recently inserted in the revised Puduval Rules with a view to create facilities for the members of this community, who are as a rule homeless, for acquiring small homesteads in the vicinity of the places where they have to eke out their living.

35. Conclusion.—I think that I am fairly entitled to claim that the spirit that actuates the Government of His Highness the Maha Raja is one of unstinted and devoted service to the people of this country. It is needless for me to add that the success of that service must in a very large measure depend on the use to which you will be putting the enlarged opportunities now afforded to you and the extent to which you will be evincing your willingness to co-operate with the Government in all that concerns your welfare and progress."

The Assembly adjourned at 1-5 P. M. to meet again the next day.

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